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Information Bulletin

Grade 6 Social Studies
1995-96

This document was written primarily for:

Students	✓
Teachers	✓
Administrators	✓
Parents	
General Audience	
Others	✓ Superintendents

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This bulletin contains general information about the Provincial Student Assessment program and information specific to the Grade 6 Social Studies Achievement Test. **This bulletin replaces all previous bulletins.**

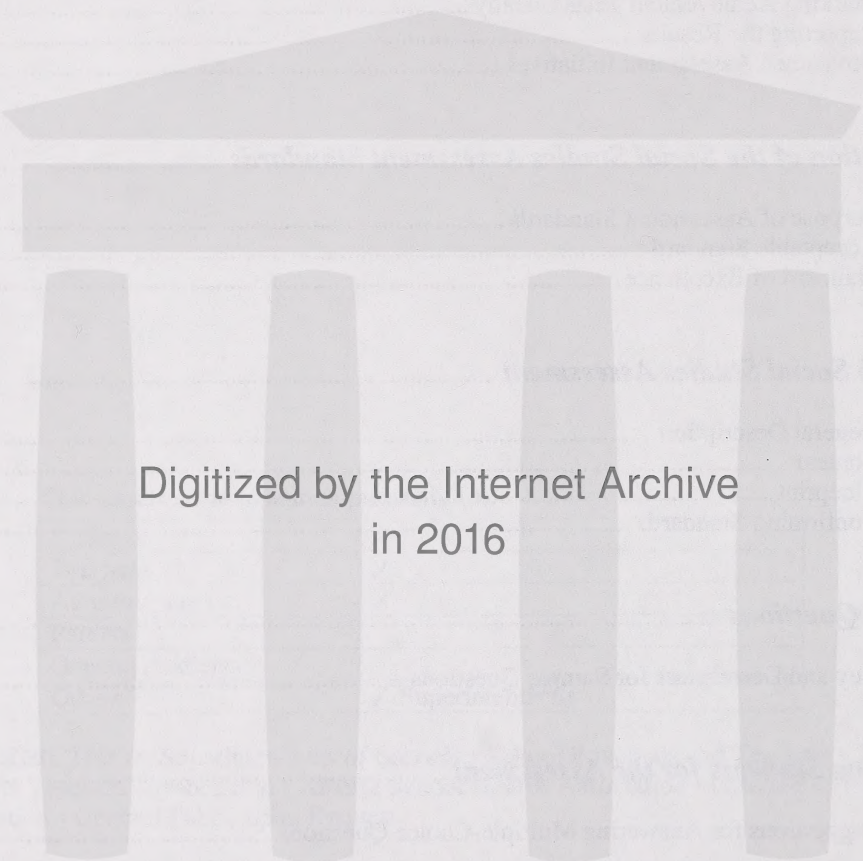
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October 1995

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General Information

The Provincial Student Assessment Program provides teachers, parents, students, school administrators, Alberta Education, and the public with information about what students know and can do in relation to provincial standards. Group results are reported at school, district, and provincial levels to improve learning opportunities for students.

The assessments are administered in two subject areas at Grade 3—language arts and mathematics—and in four subject areas at grades 6 and 9—language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science.

The assessments are based on provincial standards, which reflect important learnings in the subject areas listed above. Classroom teachers from across the province are extensively involved in developing and field testing the assessment instruments.

Administering the Assessment

Information about the nature of the provincial assessments as well as their administration to special needs students can be found in the *General Information Bulletin, Provincial Student Assessment Program*, which is mailed to all superintendents and principals each fall.

Schedule

The written-response component of English and French Language Arts will be administered during the last week of May. The multiple-choice component of all achievement tests will be administered during the last two weeks of June. Specific information regarding scheduling is provided in the current *General Information Bulletin, Provincial Student Assessment Program*.

To minimize any risks to security, we recommend that all students complete the test

on the same day. Superintendents approve a local schedule for achievement test administration within the dates provided. Students who are absent when the tests are administered and who return to school by the end of the school year must write the tests upon their return. By scheduling the tests early in the administration period, most, if not all, absentees can be tested upon their return to school. The principal is responsible for ensuring the security of the tests.

The tests that will be administered each year are:

Grade 3

English Language Arts (*Part A: Writing and Part B: Reading*)
Mathematics (English and French forms)

Grade 6

English Language Arts (*Part A: Writing and Part B: Reading*)
Français 6^e Année (*Partie A: Production écrite and Partie B: Lecture*)
Mathematics (English and French forms)
Science (English and French forms)
Social Studies (English and French forms)

Grade 9

English Language Arts (*Part A: Writing and Part B: Reading*)
Français 9^e Année (*Partie A: Production écrite and Partie B: Lecture*)
Mathematics (English and French forms)
Science (English and French forms)
Social Studies (English and French forms)

Students in French Immersion Programs

All students in French Immersion programs must write the French form of the achievement tests. Alberta Education will send a checklist to schools by January requesting an indication of how many English or French tests are required. These forms must be returned through jurisdiction offices by mid-February.

Marking Achievement Tests Locally

Teachers will be able to mark the tests before returning them to Alberta Education.

Teachers can use the results as part of an individual student's year-end assessment, as well as for planning instruction.

Reporting the Results

Each school jurisdiction will receive a district report and individual school reports regarding their students' achievement, as well as guidelines for interpreting these results in relation to provincial standards.

To facilitate reflection on school programs, we expect that results will be shared with all school staff (not just teachers of grades 3, 6, and 9), as well as with parents and the community.

An individual profile for each student will be sent to the school that the student will attend in September. We also expect that these reports will be shared with parents.

Provincial results for each subject and grade will be made public in September, in documents titled *Assessment Highlights*.

Broadened Assessment Initiatives

The Student Evaluation Branch has developed additional instruments to collect a broader base of information about what students know and can do than achievement tests themselves can provide. These instruments will be administered to a provincial sample of students in all subjects on a rotating basis. The following assessments will be given in 1996:

Grade 3

- problem-solving activities in mathematics

Grade 6

- "whole book" performance-based assessment in language arts

Grade 9

- problem-solving activities in mathematics

Description of the Social Studies Assessment Standards

The provincial standards are the basis upon which we assess how well students have learned social studies by the end of Grade 6. These standards reflect the essential learnings that all Alberta students are expected to achieve.

Provincial standards are useful, therefore, for assessing Grade 6 students in all types of school programs—public, private, and home education.

Purpose of Assessment Standards

The following statements describe what is expected of Grade 6 students who are meeting the *acceptable standard* or the *standard of excellence* on independent work at the end of Grade 6. The statements represent the standards against which student achievement will be measured. By comparing actual results with provincial standards, decisions can be made about whether achievement is, in fact, "good enough."

Acceptable Standard

Students who meet the *acceptable standard* in Grade 6 Social Studies are expected to have a basic understanding of the concepts, generalizations, and skills fundamental to the program.

Students who meet the *acceptable standard* are expected to know that all people have similar physical, social, and psychological needs. They understand these concepts and are able to give examples of each. They know how individual and societal needs are met by local government; as well, they have a basic understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizens.

These students are expected to independently understand, organize, analyze, synthesize, and apply social studies related ideas and concepts in simple and familiar situations. They should be able to apply their knowledge of basic concepts such as human needs, class structure, rights, responsibilities, local government, lobby groups, communication, technology, and sharing. Students who meet the *acceptable standard* are able to distinguish between fact and opinion, compare maps of different scales and compute distances, and organize information into charts and graphs. Students who meet the *acceptable standard* should be able to use higher-level thinking skills in familiar contexts.

The expectation is that these students will be successful with familiar tasks and be able to compare and contrast the ways in which different societies meet basic needs. Also, they are expected to analyze and synthesize information to make inferences and draw conclusions about how traditions, customs, individuals, and government influence the way in which people meet their basic needs.

Standard of Excellence

Students who meet the *standard of excellence* in Grade 6 Social Studies have internalized most, if not all, of the concepts and generalizations fundamental to social studies. They are confident learners who demonstrate a clear and accurate understanding of how individual and societal needs are met in different societies. They are able to transfer their knowledge and understanding to unfamiliar situations.

Students achieving the *standard of excellence* are able to deal with complex details and ideas. They are able to organize and interpret a wide variety of information and abstract material to a limited degree. They are able to apply higher level thinking skills to unfamiliar contexts.

Grade 6 Social Studies Assessment

General Description

The assessment consists of 50 multiple-choice questions.* The student is required to use a separate answer sheet.

The assessment is designed to be completed in 60 minutes. However, additional time up to 30 minutes may be provided to allow students to finish.

Content

The test is based on three social studies topics.

Topic A

Local Government

Topic B

Greece: An Ancient Civilization

Topic C

China: A Pacific Rim Nation

The topics are integrated within the 50 questions. For example, questions on *Topic A: Local Government* do not constitute the first section. They are combined with concepts related to topics B and C, and appear throughout the test.

The knowledge and skills components are integrated in the test. Neither participation skills nor attitude objectives are directly evaluated on this test. However, they contribute to students' ability to do the test.

The following blueprint shows the weighting and distribution for the questions.

*All Grade 6 Achievement Tests will consist of 50 questions.

		Topic A Local Government	Topic B Greece: An Ancient Civilization	Topic C China: A Pacific Rim Nation	Proportion of Score
Knowledge	Understands Generalizations, Concepts, Related Facts, and Content	14%	13%	13%	40%
Skills	Locating, Organizing, Interpreting Information	20%	20%	20%	60%
	Geography/Mapping				
	Analyzing, Synthesizing, Evaluating				
	Proportion of Score	34%	33%	33%	100%

Confirming Standards

Confirming standards is a process whereby judgements about students' performance on the assessment are made in relation to provincial standards. For more information on confirming standards procedures, refer to Appendix A of the *Achievement Testing Program Provincial Report, June 1993 Administration*. For information on the selection of teachers for participation in the confirming standards process, refer to the current *General Information Bulletin, Provincial Student Assessment Program*.

Sample Questions

Examples of multiple-choice questions are presented on the following pages. The examples illustrate the nature and complexity of the questions that will appear on the test. These questions have appeared on previous achievement tests and may be

used with students. Other items from previous tests remain secured (see *General Information Bulletin, Provincial Student Assessment Program* for details).

Background information for each question is provided. The *Key and Descriptors for Sample Questions* are on page 15. Each question is classified according to the topic on which it is based. In addition, the curriculum and assessment standards for each question are included.

Please note that these questions include examples of knowledge and skill questions for each of the three topics. The weightings assigned on the actual test are indicated in the blueprint above.

We encourage teachers to familiarize students with the types of questions that will appear on the achievement test by discussing these sample questions with them.

Use the following information to answer questions 1 and 2.

People have similar needs that can be grouped as being physical, social, or psychological. Both individuals and governments work toward meeting these needs. Some of these groups of needs are:

Group A

education
transportation
health care

Group B

sports
singing
games

Group C

food
clothing
shelter

Group D

resources
literature
paintings

1. Three ways of meeting social needs are listed in

- A. Group A
- B. Group B
- C. Group C
- D. Group D

2. Three services that governments **most** often provide are listed in

- A. Group A
- B. Group B
- C. Group C
- D. Group D

Read the following comments about how Ancient Greek society was organized. Then answer questions 3 and 4.

"As the son of an assembly leader, I'm allowed to receive a good education. My father owns land and takes part in the government. Someday I will do the same. With my male friends, I often participate in athletic activities."



Kynophilus

"My father is a slave so I'm a slave also. I spend my days working for the citizen who owns me. My father hopes that someday he will have enough money to buy our freedom. Although he still could not own land or vote at the assembly, it would be nice for us to be free."



Theo

"I'm the daughter of a citizen, but I'm not allowed to have the same education as my brother. Females stay at home most of the time and can't even attend sporting events. My mother isn't allowed to vote. I don't think this is fair."



Aria

3. Based on the comments, which of the following statements is factual?

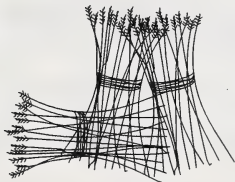
- A. Theo hates being a slave.
- B. Theo will buy his freedom.
- C. Kynophilus will become a citizen.
- D. Aria wants to be an Olympic athlete.

4. A **true** statement about class structure in Ancient Greek society is that

- A. there were only two classes
 - B. all males had the same rights
 - C. there was inequality among the classes
 - D. male and female citizens had the same rights
-

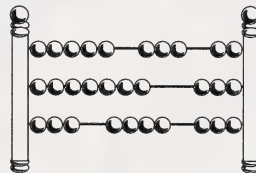
5. The picture below that shows what the Ancient Greeks would have used to satisfy a physical need is

A.



Sheaves of wheat

B.



Abacus beads

C.



Scroll

D.

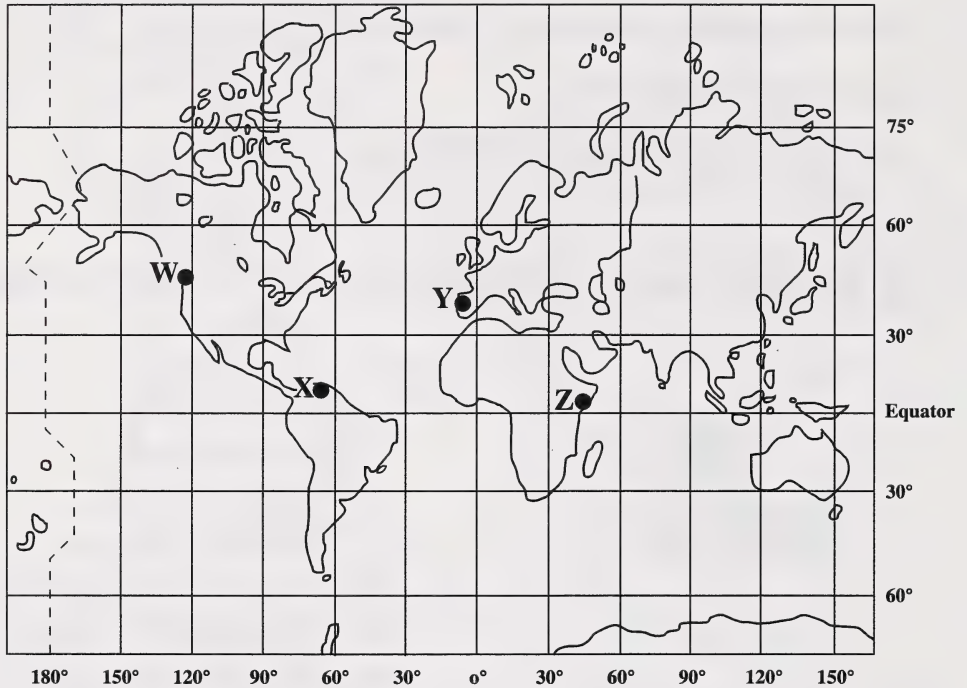


Musical instrument

Use the following information to answer question 6.

Athens, Greece, and Beijing, China, recently both bid to host Summer Olympic Games. Television networks need to use a map to obtain information about these cities and to position satellites.

World Map



6. China needs to work with another Pacific Rim country on a communications system. Which letter on the map represents that other country?

A. Letter W
B. Letter X
C. Letter Y
D. Letter Z

7. Canada and China are becoming more important trading partners **mainly** because

A. they are in the same hemisphere
B. both are on the same continent
C. both border the Pacific Ocean
D. they are closer to the equator

Use the following information to answer questions 8 to 10.

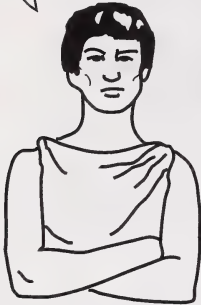
A Grade 6 class watched the video “Heilongjiang: Alberta’s Twin Province.” Their teacher had instructed them to pay particular attention to the ways that goods and services are exchanged to help satisfy needs. After seeing the video, the class discussed it and made the following chart:

Canada to China	China to Canada
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• oil and gas• movies• technology• pipelines• fish-farming methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• gunpowder• magnetic compass• postal system• tea• rice

8. Which is the **best** title for this chart?
- A. Modern Sharing Countries
B. Canada and China: Sharing Goods and Ideas
C. Some of the Things China Has Sent to Canada
D. How Canada Benefits from Trade with China
9. Which statement **best** describes the **whole** chart?
- A. Canada receives rice from China, and China receives oil and gas from Canada.
B. What Canada provides to China is more useful than what China provides to Canada.
C. Through exchanges, over the years, Canada and China have satisfied some of their needs.
D. Canadians want more Chinese tourists, and the Chinese want more Canadians to eat Chinese foods.
10. One purpose of twinning Heilongjiang and Alberta is to
- A. protect Chinese lifestyles
B. compare the wealth of these provinces
C. force Canadian traditions onto the Chinese
D. promote communication between these provinces

Read the following comments about citizenship in Ancient Greece and in present-day Canada. Then answer questions 11 to 13.

"My name is Spiro and I'm a citizen of Athens. I oppose the plan to build a new aqueduct."



An Ancient Greek

"My name is Alicia. As a Canadian citizen and a taxpaying resident of Horse River, I oppose the plan to build a new fire hall."



A Present-day Canadian

11. What would Spiro do to make his opinion known?
- A. Write a letter
 - B. Join a lobby group
 - C. Call for an election
 - D. Speak at the next assembly
12. To make her opinion known, the first thing that Alicia would do is
- A. run for office
 - B. call for an election
 - C. write a letter to her town council
 - D. make an appearance on television
13. The **main** reason that people such as the Ancient Greeks and present-day Canadians organize themselves through governments is to
- A. raise money to pay for services
 - B. satisfy some of their needs
 - C. create jobs for citizens
 - D. form political parties

14. Town council is considering a bylaw that would restrict bicyclists to certain areas. Some people feel strongly about the proposed bylaw. Which person is using a fact to support a position on this issue?

A.



Bicyclist

“I think the bylaw would be unfair. I get a lot of enjoyment bicycling to and from school.”

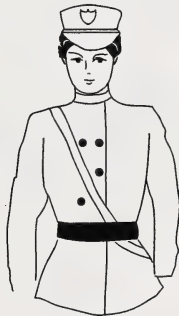
B.



Driver

“I think this would be a good bylaw. As a driver, I worry about injuring a bicyclist.”

C.



Police officer

“I’d like to see this bylaw passed. The number of accidents involving bicyclists has increased over the past two years.”

D.



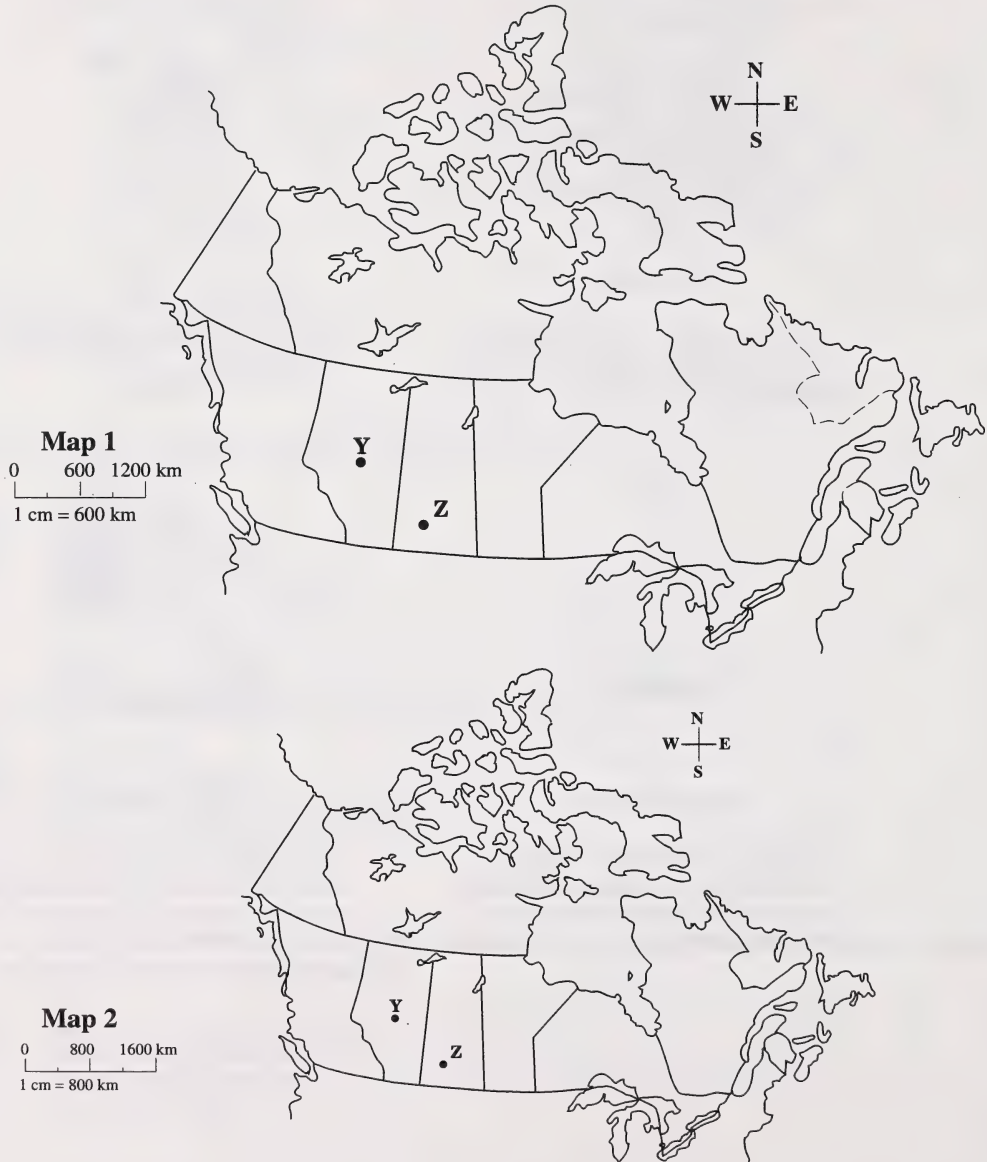
Dog owner

“The bylaw is a good idea. I feel that I can’t walk my dog in the park anymore because there are so many bicyclists there.”

Use the following information to answer questions 15 and 16

While travelling with her parents in Western Canada, Sheila was asked by her mother to calculate the distance between two cities. Sheila's atlas had two maps of Canada. Although each map was a different size, she was still able to determine the distance.

Maps of Canada



15. Sheila determined that the distance between the two cities, Y and Z, is approximately
- A. 600 km
 - B. 800 km
 - C. 1200 km
 - D. 4000 km
16. By using both maps, Sheila discovered that
- A. scales help to determine direction
 - B. the same scale could be used on both maps
 - C. a scale representing larger distances must be used for map 2
 - D. a scale representing smaller distances must be used for map 2

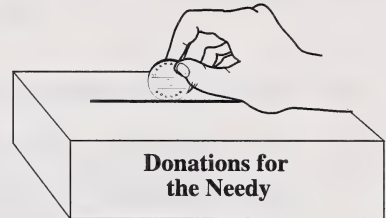
17. Mrs. Jones is considering organizing a lobby group. An activity that a lobby group would **most** likely be involved in is

A.



striking for higher wages

B.



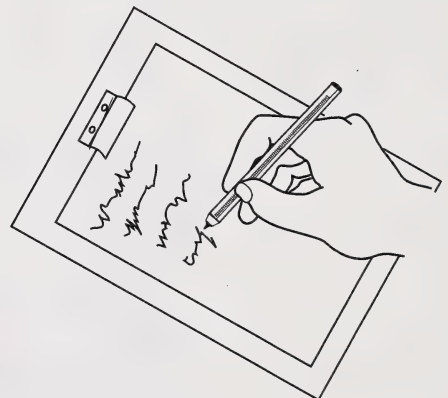
giving money to the poor and homeless

C.



marching in a Canada Day parade

D.



circulating a petition

Key and Descriptors for Sample Questions

Ques.	Key	Topic	Component	Category*	Curriculum Standard	Assessment Standard**
1	B	A	Knowledge	C	Understand concept of social needs	A
2	A	A	Knowledge	C	Identify needs met by government	A
3	C	B	Skills	L	Interpret comments to identify a fact	E
4	C	B	Skills	A	Synthesize information to draw a conclusion	A
5	A	B	Knowledge	C	Know examples of physical needs	A
6	A	C	Skills	G/M	Locate a Pacific Rim country on a map	A
7	C	C	Knowledge	C	Understand the importance of Pacific Rim countries	A
8	B	C	Skills	L	Interpret chart to select the main idea	A
9	C	C	Skills	A	Synthesize data from chart to select best conclusion	A
10	D	C	Knowledge	C	Understand reasons for the twinning of cities and provinces	A
11	D	B	Knowledge	F	Know the role of the assembly in Ancient Greece	A
12	C	A	Knowledge	C	Understand the democratic process	A
13	B	A	Knowledge	G	Understand that people organize into groups to meet some needs	A
14	C	A	Skills	L	Distinguish fact from opinion	E
15	B	A	Skills	G/M	Use scale to calculate distance on map	A
16	C	A	Skills	G/M	Interpret maps to determine relationship between scale and map size	E
17	D	A	Knowledge	C	Understand how lobby groups can influence decisions	A

*Category: F—Facts
 C—Concepts
 G—Generalizations
 L—Locating, Organizing, Interpreting Information
 G/M—Geography/Mapping
 A—Analyzing, Synthesizing, Evaluating

**Assessment Standard: A—Students meeting the acceptable standard should be able to correctly answer questions such as these.
 E—In addition to answering the questions identified for the acceptable standard, students meeting the standard of excellence should be able to correctly answer questions such as these.

Preparing Students for the Assessment

I strongly advocate preparing children to understand tests and testing through extensive class discussion about the makeup of the test and how to take it, and then adequate practice to find out their own particular weaknesses in approaching tests.

—Graves, p. 183

We hope that teachers will share the following information with their students to help them prepare for the Social Studies Achievement Test.

Have students do the sample questions included in this bulletin. Then have students share strategies they used to answer the questions.

Suggestions for Answering Multiple-Choice Questions

The following suggestions are provided to help prepare students for the Grade 6 Social Studies multiple-choice questions.

Make sure you consider all forms of information provided. Information will be presented not only in words but also in visual forms such as cartoons, pictures, charts, or maps. Consider all forms of information provided and think carefully about them before you try to answer any of the questions; or read the questions first, and then consider all questions you need to answer.

When answering “best answer” questions, be sure to carefully read all four alternatives (A, B, C, and D) before choosing the answer that you think is best. Some of the questions are designed to test your ability to make a judgement. These questions will always include a bold-faced qualifier such as **best**, **most strongly**, or **most clearly** in their stems. All of the alternatives (A, B, C, and D) are, to some degree, correct, but one of the alternatives will be “best” in that it takes more of the information into account or can be supported most strongly by reference to the information.

When answering questions, *choose the answer you think is best.* If a correct or best answer does not become obvious to you fairly quickly, you want to eliminate the answers that seem least appropriate and then use your judgement to select an answer from those that remain.

Credit

Donald H. Graves, *Build a Literate Classroom* (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1991), p. 183.

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